

DD/P

16 March 1981

Bruce:

I appreciate your comments on the PAR survey. I have, I think, modified the memo to reflect your observations on points a and c.

On the reviewer's comments: I have always objected to OP dictum that 'I concur' is never acceptable. I am not saying that 'I concur' is always appropriate, but that the reviewer should be allowed the latitude to decide what is an appropriate comment based on the unique circumstances.

Case in point: I personally am responsible for reviewing most of the Processing clericals plus everyone in CSS (full and part time) in addition, of course, to those people reporting directly to the Division Chiefs. In the case of the first two categories, I may or may not be in a position to provide a comment that would mean anything to the employee, supervisor or reviewer. I am forced, in some cases, to commit some drivel to paper. I do not object to the review process, I object to the concept that a review is always inadequate because someone would 'only' concur.

On the AWP: Again, it's the mandatory aspect of the AWP that I object to. The AWP can be a useful tool when either party finds it beneficial. The cookie cutter approach that says--what many be good for one must be good for all--doesn't compute!

On the value of the PAR in evaluation: While the PAR certainly does impact the Panel member's evaluation, it's not overwhelmingly significant. The value of the supervisor's comments relates to the PAR, per se, not to the value of the PAR in the evaluation process.


Bob

ODP 81-326
13 March 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED] Policy and Evaluation Staff/OPPPM
FROM: [REDACTED] Chairman, Processing Evaluation Panel/ODP
SUBJECT: PAR Survey

STATINTL

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What follows is a general consensus of the members of the Processing Evaluation Panel relative to your attached PAR Survey.

1. The advantages of the PAR and its associated AWP over the previously used Fitness Report (FR) and the Letter of Instruction (LOI) is imperceptible to this Panel. While concurring in the need for some form of formal appraisal mechanism, we have serious reservations about the effectiveness and applicability of some of the current constituent elements. A brief review of these elements follows.

Specific Duties:

This element is considered useful in any evaluation system whether it be PAR or FR. Use of a rating number (1-7) or letter (O, S, etc.) is immaterial, however. Ratings, under whatever designated system, have historically clustered heavily in the 'better than average' range and there is no reason to suspect that a better 'balance' is possible, desirable or useful. Most supervisors truly think that their people are better than average. That coupled with the fact that they also believe that other supervisors tend to overrate their own people, contributes to the generally accepted concept that to be rated average is tantamount to a kiss of death.

Supervisor's Comments:

The most useful factor in the PAR/FR procedure. There is always the concern that the writing ability of the supervisor has an undue influence on the overall impact of this narrative but we feel that this section offers the best opportunity to convey to the employee, and any

reviewing or evaluating officials, an accurate evaluation of performance and potential. If there are problems or unresolved issues between supervisor and employee relative to performance or potential this section provides the opportunity for the formal expression of these concerns. Proper use of this section obviates the need for the Evaluation of Potential section.

Requiring mandatory comments on cost consciousness, EEO, safety, security, etc., is useless and just adds excess and predictable verbage to the form. Comments in these areas should only be included if the supervisor recognized deficiencies or exceptional performance in any of these activities.

Employee Comments:

Useful, though seldom used, option.

Reviewing Official Comments:

A simple 'I concur' (or equivalent) would, in most cases, be sufficient. While the articulation of a second opinion can be of help, especially in a difficult case, our experiences would indicate that reviewing comments are seldom useful.

Evaluation of Potential:

Useless. If a comment on potential is appropriate at a particular stage of an employee's career it can be addressed in the supervisor's comments. Additionally, each employee is ranked and categorized semi-annually and the ranking factors (which includes potential) and the category are available to the employee if he* is concerned or curious.

AWP:

The AWP, as its predecessor LOI, should be viewed as an optional tool when deemed necessary by either the employee or supervisor. There is no need to make it mandatory. If the employee is unclear as to his duties or how he will be evaluated, he is entitled to an AWP. If the supervisor feels it is necessary to formally advise the employee about duties and objectives and how his performance will be measured, the AWP is a necessary element in the evaluation process. In the vast

*This paper conforms to the convention that he is to be interpreted as he or she.

majority of cases it has little or no impact on rendering an objective and fair employee evaluation. The logic that contends that what may be good for one must be good for all is fallacious.

In short, we view the PAR as an overly complex, functional equivalent of the FR. The AWP, as the LOI, should be viewed as a tool to be used in exceptional circumstances. Forcing supervisors to complete and adhere to an ever growing set of forms and procedures does precious little to obviate the inherent need for good supervision/-employee communications. While this communications can be backed up by a simple PAR/FR, the primary interaction must, of necessity, be verbal and near continuous.

One final note, the Panel members are becoming increasingly weary of contending with changing policy and burgeoning procedures with no apparent improvement in substance. All of these procedures and forms take time. While we recognize our responsibilities to provide our employees with the best possible career opportunities and satisfaction, these expanding personnel management duties come at a cost. The cost is fewer and fewer man hours we can devote to satisfying our primary mission--providing Agency-wide ADP support.

Even after adjusting for the 'above average' syndrome, we can only give the PAR-AWP system an overall rating of 3.

2. Evaluations by our Panel are generally based on the the following factors:

Evaluation by the panel member who has closest supervisory responsibility over the employee (i.e., the employee's division or staff chief)	70-75%
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Collective evaluation of other panel members	15%
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NOTE: All members of the Panel have access to the latest PAR/AWP.

Previous ranking and category	10%
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Written input from non-ODP component supervisors of ODP people on rotation assignment	0-5%
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3. We do not feel that any additional information would improve the process.



cc: Processing Evaluation Panel Members
MZ Career Board Members
Chairman, Applications Evaluation Panel
Chairman, Special Projects Staff Evaluation Panel
Chairman, Management Staff Evaluation Panel

STATINTL

Panel Survey of the Performance Appraisal System

The following information is being requested from all Agency career boards and panels. The intent is to receive the greatest amount of input from those most directly involved as we evaluate the performance appraisal system which was effective 1 October 1979. Your cooperation in furnishing us with complete answers, made as detailed as you feel necessary, will be very helpful as the OPPIM completes its evaluation which will be reported to the DCL. When possible your answers should reflect the collective experience and views of your career board/panel.

1. Compare the new performance appraisal system with the former Fitness Report and describe the ways you feel one is better than the other in serving your needs. Please comment specifically about the usefulness and value of the Evaluation of Potential and the Advanced Work Plan for your purposes. Also note any significant shortcomings of the present appraisal system as they effect your function.
2. Identify the information sources (e.g., Performance Appraisals, interviews with supervisors, soft files) you use in your evaluations and the approximate percentage each provides in affecting your decisions. Other than the performance appraisal material, what source has proven to be most valuable and why?
3. In your judgment would additional information on each employee be helpful toward improving the validity of the comparative evaluation process? If so, please describe the kinds of data you feel would be useful (do not concern yourself with the source but rather with the nature of the information).

PLEASE ATTACH YOUR

ILLEGIB

BRUCE T. JOHNSON

3/12/81

DIRECTOR OF DATA PROCESSING

ADD/P

Bob - It is easy to see that you feel strongly about this subject! I would not want to inhibit your freedom to respond as you and your panel choose, but I do have one or two questions which you may wish to consider.

a) Do you really want to return to "I concur" review comments? Why not just have the next echelon simply attest to having seen ~~if~~ the comment is not to be meaningful?

I believe the fuller articulation of a second opinion can be of help, in

particular in difficult cases.

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Again, do you really want to make that entry a pro forma one?

b. Doesn't the ~~same~~ ^{PAR} process have a beginning (tasking) and ~~an~~ ^{an} end (evaluation)? If so, doesn't care in stating tasks make evaluation easier? Can't we treat the PAR as step one in a process which ~~has been~~ in the past has seen too little attention paid to establishing the ground rules for evaluation?

c. Do you really want to say that the written record counts for only 15% of the ^{total} evaluation? Is it true? Or would it be more accurate to say that the major factor is division chief evaluation as reflected in the PAR? ~~This~~ ^{Your para 2} could be read as suggesting that the written record has almost no significance ^{why} the earlier emphasis on the importance of the supervisor's comments?

STAT

Bruce Johnson

DD 90 NC?

*Ex GD - Bob accurately reflects
the opinion and mode
of operation in the Processing Panel.
GD*

*You may find my exchange with
Bob W. interesting. J*

Date

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5-75 EDITIONS